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AMERICAN VAMPIRE

SCOTT SNYDER
RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

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Rafael Albuquerque 2011

GHOST WAR

SCOTT SNYDER

RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

DAVE MCCAIG

PAT BROSSAU

WRITER

ART & COVER

DESIGN

LETTERS

JOE HUGHES

MARK DOYLE

PRODUCTION EDITOR

EDITOR

AMERICAN VAMPIRE

CREATED BY

SNYDER & ALBUQUERQUE





I COULDN'T
AGREE MORE,
DOLLY! IT ALWAYS
HAS BEEN...



AND ALWAYS
WILL BE!



NOT IF
I CAN HELP
IT!



BLAM

AARRRGH!









YOU REMEMBER
WHAT I TOLD YOU THE
FIRST TIME WE MET?
BY THE POOL OF THAT
LADIES' BOARDING
HOUSE?



I REMEMBER
YOU CALLING
YOURSELF A
COCK...



I TOLD YOU YOU HAD
SPUNK. THAT'S WHY I
PICKED YOU, SEE?



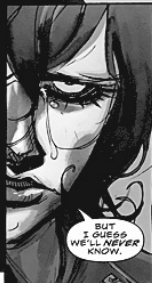
BECAUSE
DEEP DOWN, BENEATH
YOUR LITTLE HOUSEWIFE
ACT, YOU'RE A BAD
GIRL, AREN'T YOU?



A BAD,
BAD GIRL...ALL
YOU NEEDED WAS
SOMEONE TO
BRING IT OUT OF
YOU. THAT'S WHAT
I'M HERE TO
DO.



ALWAYS.

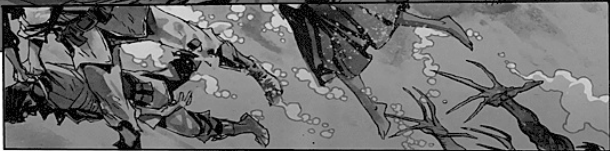














WHY
AREN'T THEY
ATTACKING
US?



THE
SUNLIGHT...
THEY CAN'T
COME CLOSE
ENOUGH TO THE
SURFACE TO
REACH US.

YET...

...THE
SUN WILL
BE DOWN
SOON.



WE HAVE
TO HEAD BACK
TO SHORE.

THEY'LL
JUST
FOLLOW
US. IT'S
NO USE.



WELL,
CALVIN,
BEFORE
WE'RE...
HONORABLY
DISCHARGED?

HEH.
RIGHT. I'D
LIKE YOU TO
MEET MY
WIFE....



NICE TO
MEET YOU,
CALVIN.

IT'S A
PLEASURE.

LOOK!



WHUPWHUPWHUP

EVEN THEN,
HANGING FROM
THAT LADDER,
IT WAS HARD
TO BELIEVE
IT WAS ALL OVER...



...THAT WE'D MADE
IT OUT OF THAT
HELLHOLE ALIVE,
ALL THREE OF US.



I DON'T THINK I
REALLY BELIEVED
IT UNTIL WE
WERE BACK IN
HONOLULU.





THEN AGAIN, EVEN NOW,
LYING HERE IN THE
HOSPITAL IT WASN'T
COMPLETELY SUNK IN.

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING
THAT HAS SUNK IN, PEARL...
SOMETHING I'VE BEEN
WORKING TOWARDS
TELLING YOU THIS WHOLE
LONG LETTER, AND--



LET ME
GUESS...

...YOU'RE
WRITING A
LETTER TO
YOUR SECRET
VAMPIRE ISLAND
GIRLFRIEND?



YES, YOU
CAUGHT
ME.







HENRY, LISTEN, I JUST WANT
TO SAY THAT I FORGET SOMETIMES
HOW HARD THIS LIFE IS FOR YOU,
THIS LIFE WITH ME.



ALL THE UGLINESS, AND
I WANT YOU TO KNOW...
I WOULD UNDERSTAND IF
YOU... YOU DECIDED IT
WAS TOO MUCH.

I WOULD BE ALL RIGHT
WITH THAT. IT'D BREAK
MY HEART, BUT I'D
ACCEPT IT AND I'D
UNDERSTAND.



PEARL, I WENT TO WAR BECAUSE I
WAS AFRAID. AFRAID OF GETTING
OLDER, OF DEATH. I THOUGHT
FIGHTING WOULD GIVE ME A
PURPOSE, MAKE ME FEEL A
PART OF THINGS.

BUT THOSE
GUYS, THE VICAR,
SAM, JOHNNY, EVEN
CALVIN. THEY FIGHT
A WAR EVERY DAY.
THEY HAVE PURPOSE,
A NOBLE ONE. WHAT
THEY DON'T HAVE
IS THIS.

WHAT?



A HOME.
YOU'RE MY HOME,
PEARL. AND THE
THOUGHT OF LIFE
WITHOUT THAT,
WITHOUT YOU--
NOTHING SCARES
ME MORE THAN
THAT.







AMERICAN VAMPIRE

MARK DOYLE EDITOR

AMERICAN VAMPIRE #18

HELLO, AMERICAN VAMPIRE FANS,

Well, there you have it, the conclusion to our epic World War II tale, "Ghost War." I hope you enjoyed this story as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you. Scott and Rafael wanted to tell a massive story of love and loss and, of course, vampires, all set against the backdrop of The Pacific. And I think they succeeded, don't you? Send us your letters so we know what you think!

Speaking of letters, let's see what you had to say about the previous issues...

Dear AMERICAN VAMPIRE,

I picked up the first issue of AMERICAN VAMPIRE because I saw Stephen King's name on it, to be totally honest with you, and I wasn't disappointed at all. In fact, I was truly impressed, especially with Scott Snyder's first part of the first five issues. They were both gripping stories. And now I am about to read issue 16. Snyder has been the only writer on this series for a long while now and he's kept up with telling such a good story, he keeps me guessing about what will come next! Thank you for creating Skinner Sweet. He truly is the man! AMERICAN VAMPIRE kicks ass! Thank you, Scott and Vertigo.

Cameron Hastings
Hollywood, CA

Hey, Cameron, thanks for writing. A lot of folks were first drawn to AMERICAN VAMPIRE because of King's writing (heck, it would have made me pick it up! Absolutely!) but we keep hearing from folks again and again that the story and characters are so compelling that people are sticking around. That's great to hear. And I hope you keep reading because Scott and Rafael have a TON of story to tell, so don't go anywhere!

Dear Editor:

I finished reading AMERICAN VAMPIRE #15, and it is shaping up to be the best story arc to date. Scott Snyder gave us a great action-packed issue with very strong dialogue. I would say the dialogue in this issue is the key factor that continues to make this arc awesome. The explanation of how quickly the Taipan Vampires breed when compared to their European counterparts is an important story element for old and new readers alike. The "older" readers get information that will play an important role in the story later on, and the "new" readers get brought up to speed on the title's premise. Kudos to Mr. Snyder!

Rafael Albuquerque created some gruesome scenes with those vile vampires. Dave McCaig's colors add to the scenes exponentially. This has to be the best artist-colorist combo in the industry right now. They can change the mood from intense to soothing just by turning the page. This is no ordinary feat, and they accomplish it with great success. Kudos to Mr. Albuquerque and Mr. McCaig!

Getting back to the story—it doesn't look too good for Henry, and even worse for Skinner. Pearl's situation also

seems to be some kind of trap. The suspense of whether or not they will survive makes this story very engaging. Mr. Snyder is doing a great job keeping us on our toes. I can't wait to see how this ends... or can I? (*shudder*)

Thank you,

Nick (dcfan4ever)

Thanks for writing, Nick. I'm happy to hear that you've enjoyed the story so far, and I look forward to your thoughts now that we've wrapped things up! So keep those letters coming.

I'm especially happy to hear you enjoy Dave McCaig's color on this book. I always marvel at his ability to adapt to different art, different settings, different tones. He's a wizard!

Dear Mark,

AMERICAN VAMPIRE has me researching the folklore and legends of vampires from various cultures. With the "Ghost War" arc focusing my attention on the Japanese vampire, I learned that there is very little Japanese folklore about vampires. The closest equivalent to vampires were the "kappa," mischievous water creatures that would suck blood from a victim's anus (would even a Vertigo comic ever feature such a creature?). There is also the tale of the "Vampire Cat of Nabeshima," in which Prince Nabeshima destroys a vampire cat that has plagued his household (vampire bats are scary enough, but vampire cats creep me out). However, vampires inspired by western legends appeared in Japanese literature beginning in the 1930s and Japanese cinema in the 1950s. This modern, European-style vampire is called a "kyuketsuki." Japanese vampires are an interesting example of how vampire legends develop and change in a culture over time, and therefore a good thematic fit for AMERICAN VAMPIRE!

Reed Beebe
Kansas City, MO

Thanks for writing, Reed. As I've said before, we here at AV headquarters do a hefty amount of research too. We also found that there weren't really any straight-up vampire legends that we could adapt for our story. But Rafael did base some of his early designs for these new vamps on Japanese Tengu spirits. (Note to self: remember to include this early design in the collection of American Vampire Vol. 3. I think fans will dig it.) As the story developed and we decided these would be subterranean, cave-dwelling vamps, he altered the design to the eyeless versions you see in the story now.

As for anus-sucking water vamps...hmm...maybe next time our heroes are on an island...

Dear Editor,

First off, let me begin this letter with a disclaimer so it is not misconstrued: Of all the comics I buy on a weekly basis, there are only two titles I look forward to with the same level of anticipation as a child looking forward to

Christmas morning: AMERICAN VAMPIRE and SCALPED. This letter concerns the former.

I'm loving watching the characters and myths of AMERICAN VAMPIRE blossom into their own, era-spanning universe. The current "Ghost War" arc has been an unexpected delight. The reason I use the word "unexpected" is because I was slightly disappointed when I read that the time line was being fast-forwarded yet again, further away from what initially drew me to the series and what have been my favorite AV stories to date: those initial tales of Skinner Sweet tearin' s@s@ up in the Wild West! Which leads me to my question: Will we ever see a return to those dusty days of the late 1800s in the pages of AMERICAN VAMPIRE? I'm along for the ride either way, but I'd love to further explore Skinner's time in the Wild West.

Thanks!

Keith
St. Paul, MN

Thanks for writing, Keith. Because you demanded it, next issue we return to the Wild West with another "Lost Tale of Skinner Sweet." This time we go back to the days BEFORE Skinner was a vampire or even an outlaw, back when he was fighting in the Indian Wars with his good friend—James Book! We are incredibly lucky to have the legendary Jordi Bernet doing the art for this 3-part story we're calling "The Beast in the Cave." So get ready for that and LOTS more of these "lost tales" to come...

Thanks for reading and writing, everyone!
—Mark

To submit a letter to the editor go to:
www.dclatterspage.com

Letters may be sent by regular mail to this address:

Letters to the Editor
DC Comics
1700 Broadway
New York, NY 10019
ATTN: VERTIGO

Please include your full name, address, and telephone number for confirmation purposes. Letters should be no longer than 500 words and should not include attachments. Letters may be edited for length or clarity and may be published in any medium. Letters become the property of DC Comics. Unpublished letters will not be returned or acknowledged. Published letters may identify the writer by first name, hometown, state or country.



AMERICAN VAMPIRE #19

VERTIGO

SUBMIT YOUR LETTERS TO:
WWW.DCLATTERSPAGE.COM

THE HOTLIST



HELLBLAZER #282

STAND-ALONE ISSUE by cover artist extraordinaire Simon Bisley! In a British prison, a shape-shifting product of the Babylonian backstreets is about to have some fun at the prisoners' expense. Now the prison has become even more of a living hell, which should make John Constantine feel right at home when he poses as an inmate and tries to dish out his own rough justice to demonic prisoner number 666.



VERTIGO RESURRECTED: JONNY DOUBLE

Reprinting the first ever collaboration between Brian Azzarello and Eduardo Risso, the award-winning team behind 100 BULLETS and the upcoming SPACEMAN! San Francisco P.I. Jonny Double is hired to watch over a rich man's rebellious daughter. But after being seduced by the girl, Jonny finds himself mixed up in a scheme to plunder an old bank account that belonged to Al Capone.

99 DAYS HC
AMERICAN VAMPIRE #18
AMERICAN VAMPIRE: SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST #3 (of 5)
DARK RAIN: A NEW ORLEANS STORY SC
DMZ #68
FABLES #108
FABLES DELUXE EDITION VOL. 3 HC
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HOUSE OF MYSTERY #40
HOW TO UNDERSTAND ISRAEL IN 60 DAYS OR LESS SC
IZOMBIE #16
MADAME XAVADU VOL. 4: EXTRA SENSORY
NORTHLANDERS #43
THE SANDMAN VOL. 6: FABLES AND REFLECTIONS—NEW EDITION
SCALPED #52
SWEET TOOTH #24
TRANSMETROPOLITAN VOL. 10: ONE MORE TIME—NEW EDITION
THE UNWRITTEN #28

08.11
THE HIT LIST

For a FREE DOWNLOAD of the first issue of
all your favorite series go to: vertigobooks.com

LEDGE

The best man for the job is usually a woman. In this case, it's anyone but me.

I had plans – BIG plans that included sparkling prose and glittering bon mots. But I choked on the deadline and now I've got Hitchcock's tiny time bombs ticking underneath each of my fingertips...

So rather than rant about how this is the first time I've EVER missed a deadline, and BEG for an extension that isn't plausible, I've decided to reach out to the slackers around me and come up with the perfect tweets for you to send to your friends and relatives who just don't have a clue about what comics have become in the 21st century.

So take these 140 characters (or less!) about the monthly titles that we're proud to call VERTIGO. And next time give me a fake deadline!

AMERICAN VAMPIRE:

Blood-sucking evolution from the Wild West to the Jazz Age and beyond via badass Skinner Sweet and aspiring actress Pearl Jones.

DMZ:

A reckless reporter with nothing to lose in a Detached Military Zone. Political scandal, crushed dreams & war in New York's future city.

FABLES:

Fairy tale characters secretly living in the 21st century experience love, war & betrayal. Over 100 issues & 14 Eisner Awards & counting.

HOUSE OF MYSTERY:

Last call is beckoning, but it's never too late to stop by this haunted public house to hear stories of otherworldly horror & delight.

JOHN CONSTANTINE, HELLBLAZER:

London's chain-smoking mage conquered hell, cancer & demons. Now he has to survive marriage to a vicious gangster's gorgeous young daughter.

IZOMBIE:

Zombie girl detective must eat brain each month or go all night to the living dead. BFFs are ghost girl & weretier, and BF is monster hunter.

NORTHLANDERS:

Dark, timeless stories of social injustice & salvation that explore the Viking Age & one exiled man's attempt to reclaim his inheritance.

SCALPED:

A riveting brutal series about organized crime on an Indian reservation. One family's bloodline is soaked with bullets & casino blood money.

SWEET TOOTH:

A little boy with antlers takes a post-apocalyptic journey on the road to nowhere with psycho hunters and collectors nipping at his hooves.

THE UNWRITTEN:

The son of a famous novelist finds out he might be a fictional character. A shadowy cabal that controls world literature is out to get him.



SHELLY BOND is the editor of **FABLES**, **IZOMBIE**, **HELLBLAZER**, **HOUSE OF MYSTERY** and other various and sundry cool comic books and graphic novels. Allegations that she wears are completely unfounded.

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